WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for deploying an annotation system in an enterprise comprising:

identifying annotatable data objects;

identifying annotation metadata to be kept for each combination of at least one role and at least one annotatable data object; and

creating annotation structures, for each combination of at least one role and at least one annotatable data object, containing fields associated with the identified annotation metadata.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein identifying annotatable data objects related to the processes comprises:

identifying data sources; and

identifying subtypes of the data sources.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein at least one identified data source is a database table and at least one identified subtype of the database table is a particular type of database table.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein at least one identified data source is a text document and at least one identified subtype of the text document is a particular type of text document.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising installing the annotation system, accessible by various users within the enterprise, wherein the various users are able to create annotations for data objects based annotation structures associated with the data objects and the roles of the users.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the annotation system presents, to the various users, graphical user interface screens for creating annotations for data objects, wherein the graphical user interface screens allow a user to enter information for annotation fields contained in an annotation structure associated with the data object and the user's role.

7. A method for exchanging information between entities on a network comprising:

installing an annotation management system on the network;

identifying a plurality of annotatable data objects manipulated by a plurality of applications on the network; and

providing a set of one or more configuration tools allowing a user to define an annotation structure containing one or more annotation fields and associate the annotation structure with at least one of the annotatable data objects.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools further allow a user to define roles and associate annotation structures with combinations of roles and annotatable data objects.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the configuration tools provide one or more graphical user interface screens for associating one or more roles with a user.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the configuration tools provide one or more graphical user interface screens for associating one or more users with a role.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allow a user to specify one or more filters specifying how annotation fields contained in an annotation structure can be manipulated based on user roles.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools:

allow a users to specify one or more annotation field groups; and

allow annotation field groups to be added to annotation structures.

13. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allow a user to associate one or more transforms with an annotation structure, the transforms for use in converting the annotation structure into a graphical user interface.

14. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allow a user to associate an annotation structure with annotatable data objects associated with more than one data source.

15. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allows annotatable sub-objects of data objects to be associated with annotation structures.

16. A computer-readable medium containing an executable component for configuring an annotation system for managing annotations created for data objects manipulated by one or more applications on a network which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

providing at least one graphical user interface screen for defining annotation structures containing one or more annotation fields; and

providing at least one graphical user interface screen for associating annotation structures with at least one annotatable data object.

17. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the operations further comprise providing at least one graphical user interface screen for associating at least one role with at least one user.

18. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the operations further comprise providing at least one graphical user interface screen for associating at least one transform with an annotation structure, the transform for use in generating a graphical user interface based on the annotation structure.

19. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the operations further comprise providing at least one graphical user interface screen for specifying how users of users operating in different roles can access fields contained in an annotation structure.

20. A system for managing annotations for one or more different type data sources manipulated by a plurality of different type applications, comprising:

an annotation database for storing annotations separately from the data sources associated with the annotations;

a set of annotatable data object points defining portions of the data sources associated with the annotations described by the associated annotations;

an annotation server configured to receive requests to access annotations for one or more of the annotatable data object points issued by the one or more of the applications running on the client computer and generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with the one or more of the annotatable data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for the one or more annotatable data object points; and

one or more configuration tools allowing a user to define annotation structures and associate annotation structures with one or more of the annotatable data object points.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the configuration tools allow users to associate a single annotation structure with annotatable data object points associated with more than one data source.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein the configuration tools allow users to associate one or more roles with one or more users.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the configuration tools allow users to associate one or more annotation structures with at least one of:

one or more combinations of annotatable data object points and roles; or

one or more combinations of annotatable data object points and users.

24. The system of claim 20, wherein the configuration tools allow users to associate one or more transforms with one or more annotation structures, each transform for use in generating a graphical user interface based on an associated annotation structure.

25. The system of claim 20, further comprising a plurality of configuration files and wherein the configure tools allow a user to navigate and modify one or more of the configuration files.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the configuration files are extensible markup language (XML) files.